

CHAPTER 11. PUBLIC RELATIONS.

11-1. Definition and Purpose. The purpose of a public relations program is to promote good will between an installation and the public and to assess public reaction. The military services and installations should maintain a good public relations program concerning fishing, hunting, non-consumptive use and the environment. The public relations program should be presented as an information service.

11-2. Involvement of Personnel. Public relations involve all employees who are in contact with the public. Maintenance of good public relations is a continuous process. A noncommissioned officer or security police officer may be the primary contact with fisherman and hunters on an installation. Such personnel may become aware of public relations problems which, in turn, should be considered by the installation Natural Resources Conservation and Beautification Committee, working in cooperation with local communities.

11-3. Need for Public Relations Programs. To be most effective, a public relations program must be understood and accepted by each segment of the general public. Whether the problem is reducing an overpopulated deer herd or one which involves controlling black birds or ground squirrels which may endanger human lives, congressional inquiry is likely to occur. Answering congressional inquiries requires considerable time and might be avoided by good, on-going public relations programs. Such programs keep the local community outside the installation employees, informed about natural resources management efforts. These programs also encourage citizen participation in decision-making and support of the natural resources management program. For example, an explanation of reasons why deer cannot be harvested on certain areas of an installation because of safety or security reasons, might quell a storm of protest. The Installation Natural Resources Conservation and Beautification Committee is an excellent forum for involving

representatives of the local community, as well as assisting conservation agencies in the decision-making process.

11-4. Principles and Approaches.

11-4.1. Principles. Natural resources and public relations should be oriented directly towards making the public aware of the necessity of having a well balanced natural resources program for the benefit of all concerned, consistent with the military mission. To further good public relations a series of complex, integrated steps are recommended (Natural Resources and Public Relations, app B, No. 41):

- 11-4.1.1.** Define the problem or situation.
- 11-4.1.2.** Be sure the solution or decision is good for the people and the resource.
- 11-4.1.3.** Establish definite goals.
- 11-4.1.4.** Collect facts in relation to the situation and the specific segment of the public involved.
- 11-4.1.5.** Develop a plan.
- 11-4.1.6.** Gather necessary items and materials.
- 11-4.1.7.** Indoctrinate and organize personnel.
- 11-4.1.8.** Communicate with the public (talks, tours, meetings with the press, etc.).
- 11-4.1.9.** Conduct the operation.
- 11-4.1.10.** Constantly evaluate the entire process.
- 11-4.1.11.** Publicize the good job that was done.
- 11-4.1.12.** Organize and file materials and data for future reference.

11-4.2. Approaches. Many installations work with youth groups, providing educational and recreational opportunities and, at the same time, developing a better understanding of installation operations by the parents and other adults of the community (fig 11-1). Public field trips or "show me" trips may be used advantageously with both youth and adults, including teachers and civic leaders. Self-guided nature trails with informative signs or recorded messages along the trail can help clarify and promote good conservation and natural resources management principles and practices.



Figure 11-1. Working with a youth group.

11-5. Information and Materials. Many Federal natural resources agencies, such as the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service have film libraries and other source materials which are helpful in mounting effective public relations programs. Films can be borrowed

for use at public meetings. Similarly, state conservation departments and many private conservation organizations, such as the National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation (app C, No. 7 and No. 8) have excellent films and materials.